

STRETCHING EXERCISES

Stretching exercises are effective ways to reduce muscle discomfort associated with prolonged use or static postures. Exercises should be conducted at regular intervals and not wait until discomfort appears. For intense tasks (e.g., data entry) it is not uncommon to stop work every 30 minutes to perform stretching exercise.

In general, stretches should start out easy and be performed regularly. Exercise should not cause pain. If pain occurs, reduce range of motion and intensity of the stretch. If pain persists, stop exercise and seek medical advice. If you are already experiencing WMSD or have experienced other medical problems, seek medical advice before beginning these stretches.

The following exercises are examples you can try to relieve muscle discomfort and develop muscles to prevent injury/illness. **Perform each motion in a slow and controlled fashion. Hold each stretch 5 to 10 seconds.**

NECK STRETCHES

- Slowly nod your head from chin on the chest to looking at the ceiling.
- Tilt your head toward each shoulder.
- Turn your head from side to side and look over your shoulder.

HAND STRETCHES

- Make a fist, then span or spread your fingers as far as possible.
- Squeeze a soft ball

WRIST STRETCHES

- Hold arms straight out in front of body bend your hands up and down.
- Hold arms straight out with palms facing up and hands on top of each other. Use the hand on the bottom to rotate the hand on top in an outward direction. Repeat on the other hand.

FOREARM STRETCHES

- Place palms together with fingers pointing toward ceiling.
- Keeping palms together, slowly lower hands until you feel a stretch.

SHOULDER STRETCHES

- Shrug your shoulders, then relax them.
- Roll your shoulders forward and backward.
- Gently shake your shoulders.
- Pinch your shoulder blades together.
- Reach over head and stretch, while stretching do side bends.

UPPER BACK & ARM STRETCHES

While sitting...

- Sit up straight, place your hands behind your head, move your elbows backwards to pinch your shoulder blades together.
- Stretch your arms behind your back.

While standing...

- Interlace your fingers with palms facing away from you body, straighten your arms and lift them toward the ceiling.

LOWER BACK STRETCHES

While sitting...

- Bend forward in your chair and *if able* touch hands to floor.
- Grasp leg at shin and slowly pull leg up to your chest. Repeat with other leg.
- If you have knee pain, place hands **behind** thighs and slowly pull.

While standing...

- Place hands on hips and bend slowly backward.

For more stretching exercises or to view pictures of some exercises, go to <http://keats.admin.virginia.edu/ergo/stretch.html>